

IN THE CLAIMS

The text of all pending claims (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~striketrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please AMEND and CANCEL claims 3 and 11 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A cross-site search method used in a server that connects to a user terminal and information retrieval sites through a network and that requests information retrieval according to a search condition designated by said user terminal to receive search results from said information retrieval sites, said method comprising:

recording, into storage, a script definition in which a conversion function and an authentication function are defined for each of said information retrieval sites that requires authentication as a condition to respond with search results, said conversion function converting a description of ~~the~~ a search condition in compliance with a predetermined description rule into a description in compliance with a description rule of each of said information retrieval sites, and said authentication function being used for an authentication procedure of each of said information retrieval sites that requires authentication as a condition to respond with search results;

recording, into said storage, a script definition in which a conversion function is defined for each of said information retrieval sites in which an authentication is unnecessary;

recording a predetermined number of pieces of authentication information into said storage for each of said information retrieval sites that require authentication ~~and restrict number of accesses~~, said predetermined number of pieces of authentication information being assigned to said server by ~~each of said an~~ information retrieval sites ~~site to restrict number of accesses from said server to the information retrieval site~~;

generating a cross-site search process when designation of one or more of said information retrieval sites with the search condition is accepted from said user terminal;

said cross-site search process executing:

reading, from said storage, said script definition corresponding to an information retrieval site chosen as a target information retrieval site from among said information retrieval

sites designated by said user terminal;

identifying, from among the predetermined number of pieces of authentication information assigned to the server by the target information retrieval site, a piece of authentication information unused by other cross-site search processes, from among pieces of authentication information corresponding to said information retrieval site designated by said user terminal when said script definition read in said reading step defines the authentication function;

transmitting, to said target information retrieval site, said unused piece of authentication information identified in said identifying of the unused piece of authentication information;

receiving authentication from said target information retrieval site by transmitting to which said piece of authentication information unused by other cross-site search processes according to said authentication function is transmitted;

converting said search condition designated by said user terminal into a search condition in compliance with a description rule of said target information retrieval site according to said conversion function defined in said script definition;

transmitting, to said target information retrieval site, a search request with said search condition converted in said converting;

receiving search results from said target information retrieval site by transmitting a to which said search request that includes with said search condition converted in said converting steps is transmitted; and

transmitting, to said user terminal, said search results received from said target information retrieval site.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (cancelled)

4. (Currently Amended) The cross-site search method according to claim 1, wherein the communication between said server and said user terminal, and the communication between said server and said information retrieval sites use TCP/IP and HTTP, respectively.

5. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium encoded with a cross-site search

program that when executed by a server, connected to a user terminal and information retrieval sites through a network, requests information retrieval according to a search condition designated by said user terminal to receive search results from the information retrieval sites by performing a method comprising:

recording, into storage, a script definition in which a conversion function and an authentication function are defined for each of said information retrieval sites that requires authentication as a condition to respond with search results, said conversion function converting a description of the a search condition in compliance with a predetermined description rule into a description in compliance with a description rule of each of said information retrieval sites, and said authentication function being used for an authentication procedure of each of said information retrieval sites that requires authentication as a condition to respond with search results;

recording, into said storage, a script definition in which a conversion function is defined for each of said information retrieval sites in which an authentication is unnecessary;

recording a predetermined number of pieces of authentication information into said storage for each of said information retrieval sites that require authentication ~~and restrict number of accesses~~, said predetermined number of pieces of authentication information being assigned to said server by ~~each of said an~~ information retrieval sites site to restrict number of accesses from said server to the information retrieval site;

generating a cross-site search process when designation of one or more of said information retrieval sites with the search condition is accepted from said user terminal;

said cross-site search process executing:

reading, from said storage, said script definition corresponding to an information retrieval site chosen as a target information retrieval site from among said information retrieval sites designated by said user terminal;

identifying, from among the predetermined number of pieces of authentication information assigned to the server by the target information retrieval site, a piece of authentication information unused by other cross-site search processes, ~~from among pieces of authentication information corresponding to said information retrieval site designated by said user terminal when said script definition read in said reading step defines the authentication function;~~

transmitting, to said target information retrieval site, said piece of authentication information identified in said identifying of the unused piece of authentication information;

receiving authentication from said target information retrieval site ~~by transmitting to which said piece of~~ authentication information ~~unused by other cross-site search processes according to said authentication function is transmitted~~;

converting said search condition designated by said user terminal into a search condition in compliance with a description rule of said target information retrieval site according to said conversion function defined in said script definition;

transmitting, to said target information retrieval site, a search request with said search condition converted in said converting;

receiving search results from said target information retrieval site ~~by transmitting a to which said search request that includes with~~ said search condition ~~converted in said converting step is transmitted~~; and

transmitting, to said user terminal, said search results received from said target information retrieval site.

6. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium according to claim 5, wherein said cross-site search program is a Common Gateway Interface program.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) A server that connects to a user terminal and information retrieval sites through a network and that requests information retrieval according to a search condition designated by said user terminal to receive search results from the information retrieval sites, said server comprising:

~~receiving means for receiving said search condition from said user terminal;~~

~~a recording means for recording~~ unit that records, into storage, a script definition in which a conversion function and an authentication function are defined for each of said information retrieval sites that requires authentication as a condition to respond with search results, said conversion function converting a description of the a search condition in compliance with a predetermined description rule into a description in compliance with a description rule of each of said information retrieval sites, and said authentication function being used for an authentication procedure of each of said information retrieval sites that requires authentication as a condition to respond with search results;

a recording unit that records, into said storage, a script definition in which a conversion

function is defined for each of said information retrieval sites in which an authentication is unnecessary;

~~a recording means for recording~~ unit that records a predetermined number of pieces of authentication information into said storage for each of said information retrieval sites that require authentication and restrict number of accesses, said predetermined number of pieces of authentication information being assigned to said server by each of said an information retrieval sites site to restrict the number of accesses from said server to the information retrieval site;

an accepting unit that accepts designation of one or more of said information retrieval sites with the search condition from said user terminal;

~~a generating means for generating~~ unit that generates a cross-site search process when said accepting unit accepts said designation of one of or more of said information retrieval sites with search condition is accepted from said user terminal;

said cross-site search process executing:

~~reading means for reading~~, from said storage, said script definition corresponding to an information retrieval site chosen as a target information retrieval site from among said information retrieval sites designated by said user terminal;

identifying, from among the predetermined number of pieces of authentication information assigned to the server by the target information retrieval site, means for identifying a piece of authentication information unused by other cross-site search processes, from among pieces of authentication information corresponding to said information retrieval site designated by said user terminal when said script definition read in said reading step defines the authentication function;

transmitting, to said target information retrieval site, said piece of authentication information identified in said identifying of the unused piece of authentication information;

~~receiving means for receiving authentication from said target information retrieval site by transmitting to which said piece of authentication information unused by other cross-site search processes according to said authentication function is transmitted;~~

~~converting means for converting the said search condition designated by said user terminal into a search condition in compliance with a description rule of said target information retrieval site according to said conversion function defined in said script definition;~~

transmitting, to said target information retrieval site, a search request with said search condition converted in said converting;

~~receiving means for receiving search results from said target information retrieval~~

site ~~by transmitting a to which said~~ search request ~~that includes with~~ said search condition converted in said ~~converting step is~~ transmitted; and

~~transmitting means for transmitting~~, to said user terminal, said search results received from said target information retrieval site.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Currently Amended) The cross-site search ~~condition~~ method according to claim 1, wherein said cross-site search process further ~~executing~~executes:

waiting, when all of said predetermined number of pieces of authentication information assigned by said target information retrieval site are in use by other cross-site search processes, until a piece of authentication information unused by other cross-site search processes appears one of said other cross-site processes with an in use piece of authentication information stops using the in use piece of authentication information ~~when all of the pieces of authentication information corresponding to said information retrieval site designated by user terminal are used for other cross-site search processes.~~

11. (Cancelled)